

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

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Claims 1-2 (Canceled).

✓ Claim 3 (Original): A molding base paper comprising a high density layer and a low density layer, wherein said high density layer has a density of 0.7 to 0.9 g/cm<sup>3</sup> and said low-density layer has a density of lower than 0.7 g/cm<sup>3</sup>, and wherein said base paper has a basis weight of 100 to 500 g/cm<sup>2</sup> and a density of 0.4 to 0.7 g/cm<sup>3</sup>.

✓ Claim 4 (Original): The molding base paper according to claim 3, wherein said low density layer mainly comprising pulp selected from the group consisting of mechanical pulps, curled fibers and mercerized pulps.

✓ Claim 5 (Original): The molding base paper according to claim 4, wherein said low-density layer is mainly composed of mechanical pulp.

B ✓ Claim 6 (Original): The molding base paper according to claim 5, wherein said mechanical pulp is thermomechanical pulp (TMP).

✓ Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The molding base paper according to ~~claims 1 to 6~~ claim 3, further comprising on at least one surface thereof a crack preventing paper layer having an elongation at break of at least 5 %.

✓ Claim 8 (Original): The molding base paper according to claim 7, wherein said elongation at break is at least 6%.

✓ Claim 9 (Original): The molding base paper according to claim 7, wherein said crack preventing layer has a basis weight of 50 to 150 g/m<sup>2</sup>.

✓ Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The molding base paper according to claim ~~4~~ 3, further comprising a synthetic resin layer on at least one surface thereof.

✓ Claim 11 (Original): The molding base paper according to claim 10, wherein said synthetic resin is selected from the group consisting of polyethylene, polypropylene,

polymethylpentene, polyethylene terephthalate, polybutylene terephthalate, polyamide, ethylene/vinyl alcohol copolymer, polystyrene, and polyacrylonitrile.

→ Claim 12 (Original): The molding base paper according to claim 10, wherein said synthetic resin is a biodegradable thermoplastic resin selected from the group consisting of 3-hydroxybutyrate/3-hydroxyvalerate copolymer, 3-hydroxybutyrate polymer, polycaprolactone, polyglycolide, polyvinyl alcohol, polyvinyl alcohol/starch composite, and cellulose derivatives.

Claim 13 (Original): The molding base paper according to claim 10, wherein said synthetic resin layer further contains a pigment.

Claim 14 (Original): The molding base paper according to claim 13, wherein said pigment is selected from the group consisting of calcium carbonate, kaolin, clay, talc, titanium oxide, and plastics.

Claims 15-20 (Canceled).

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Claim 21 (New): The molding base paper according to claim 3, which complies with the following conditions (1) to (4):

- (1) a tensile strength (JIS-P 8113) of at least 2.0 kN/m,
- (2) an elongation at break (JIS-P 8113) of at least 1.5 %,
- (3) a critical compression stress, defined by the following formula, in the range of 1 to 10 MPa:

$$\text{critical compression stress} = A/B$$

wherein A represents the compression strength determined by JIS-P 8126, and B represents the area of a specimen, as set forth in JIS-P 8126 in the determination of the compression strength, and

- (4) an amount of compression deformation, caused by applying compression stress of 20 kgf/cm<sup>2</sup> in the thickness direction, of at least 10 %.

DISCUSSION OF THE AMENDMENT

Claims 1, 2 and 15-20 have been canceled. Claim 7 has been amended to depend on Claim 3 only, and by changing "crack preventing layer" to --crack preventing paper layer--, as supported in the specification at page 21, lines 8-23. Claim 10 has been amended to depend on Claim 3. Finally, new Claim 21 has been added, and is based on the combination of Claims 1 and 3.

No new matter has been added by the above amendment. Claims 3-14 and 21 are now pending in the application.